Community Health Plan
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

DENTAL HEALTH

Take **Good Care** of Your **Mouth** and **Teeth**

Keeping your mouth and teeth healthy can help stop disease.

WHY TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOUTH AND TEETH?

Gums that are not healthy can spread disease into your body. Parts of the food we eat can form a sticky film on teeth called plaque. This can break down the hard outer cover of the teeth. It can also cause holes in the teeth (cavities) or your gums to bleed. This is called gum disease. These problems can spread to the bones of your mouth.

Gums that are not healthy serve as a door into your blood and spread disease in your body. Pregnant women with gum disease may have their baby too early. Mouth problems may be the first sign of other health problems. This may be true for AIDS, bone loss and some cancers.

DIABETES AND YOUR MOUTH

Many people may not know that keeping your mouth healthy can help control diabetes.

- ▶ High blood sugar can damage your teeth and mouth. Try to keep your blood sugar at normal levels.
- ▶ Dry mouth can also be a problem. The dentist can help with dry mouth.
- ▶ Gums that are sore, swollen or red are not healthy. These are signs of gum disease. Gum disease can make your blood sugar go up.

- ▶ People with diabetes should see their dentist at least twice a year.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOUTH AND TEETH

- ▶ Brush your teeth and tongue at least two times a day.
- ▶ Use a soft brush and fluoride toothpaste to avoid tooth decay.
- ▶ Get a new brush every three to four months.
- ▶ Floss to keep your gums healthy.
- ▶ See your dentist for check-ups and teeth cleaning at least two times a year.
- ▶ Eat healthy foods.
- ▶ Don't smoke.

Talk to your doctor and dentist. Make sure your mouth, gums and teeth are healthy. Taking good care of your teeth and mouth can give you something to smile about.

1-800-475-5550   **http://chp.dhs.lacounty.gov**